

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS.

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE OF CT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Dear members of the Connecticut Human Services Committee:

Good afternoon, my name is Bercela Mazariegos. I am an immigrant from Guatemala and have lived in Hartford for 12 years. I am a member of the Hartford Deportation Defense. I am in favor of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS.

My daughter's name is Kristen, she was born in Mexico and is 14 years old. She is in the eighth grade in Hartford Public Schools. She has no health insurance and needs it to get her physical, to go to the dentist, and obviously for any emergencies that come up. I'm always telling her to take care of her teeth because in this country it's too expensive to go to the dentist. It is also difficult without insurance to find clinics that can treat her. In my daughter's case, she needs glasses and we have had to buy her glasses without the help of any insurance. Sometimes she doesn't hear well either, and I haven't been able to take her to an audiologist because I think the bills will be too expensive. With what I earn, it's not enough. As a mother, one has to think first about rent. We know that everything is important and it's very difficult, but if you don't pay rent and we get evicted, what would happen to our family? Going to the doctor is as essential as having a place to live, but right now we are faced with these impossible decisions as parents.

That is why we are asking the Human Services Committee to pass S.B. 284 to expand the HUSKY program to immigrant children up to the age of 18. Adults and children have the right to have health care coverage, regardless of our immigration status.

Thank you.